Nov. 29. 1687.

IMPRIMATUR,

Hic Liber cui Titulus (Frequent and Fervent Prayer, &c.)

Jo. Battely.

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Frequent and Fervent

PRAYER

According to

SCRIPTURE

AND

PRIMITIVE USAGE,

As it is now practised by the Pious

MEMBERS

OF THE

Church of England.

By *Thomas Comber*, D. D.

LONDON,

Printed for *R. Clavell*, at the Sign of the *Peacock* in S. *Pauls* Church-yard, 1687.

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Frequent and Fervent

PRAYER

According to

SCRIPTURE

AND

Primitive Uſage, &c.

PSALM LV. verſ. 18.

In the Evening and Morning, and at Noon-day will I pray, and that inſtantly, and he ſhall hear my Voice.

THough all Scripture be written by inſpiration of God (*a*), and every part of it is uſeful upon ſome Occaſions, the Book of *Pſalms* is uſeful for all Men in all Conditions, and upon

(*a*) 2 Tim 3. 16

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all Occasions (*b*); So that what is said of all the Sacred Books, is true of this one, *It is profitable for Doctrine and Reproof, for Correction and Instruction in Righteousness*; for it contains Precepts and Promises, Directions and Examples, Prayers, Praises, and Consolations: The ancient Jews therefore had, and the modern Jews have most of their Forms of Prayer from thence (*c*). The Abassine Christians also to this day have no other Book for their daily Offices but the Book of *Psalms*, as a late Writer informs us (*d*). The Primitive Christians used them so often in the Vulgar Tongue, that the poorest People could say them by heart (*e*). And our Church desires it should be so now, and orders them to be read over once every Month, that being made familiar to us, we may in all estates have proper Forms to pray to God, and praise his holy Name.

This *Psalm* is thought by Rab. *David* to have been composed at the time of *Absolom*'s Rebellion, when the inspired Penman was in extreme danger, both by the Malice of his open Enemies (*f*), and the Treachery of his revolting Friends (*g*); and he complains especially of *Achitophel*, who had eat at his Table, and walked with him to the Temple, with whom he had conversed as a Companion, on whom he had relied as a Guide, and to whom he had dis-

b *Licet omnis Scriptura divina Dei gratiam spirat, [illegible] tamen dulcis est [illegible] morum liber.* Ambros. Præf. in Psal.

c 2 Chron. 5. 13. chap. 7. 3. & chap. 20. 21. Buxt. Synogoga cap. 5.

d Ludolf. Hist. Æthiop. l. 2. c. 12.

e Basil. Tom. I. pag. 126. B.

f Vers. 3.

g Vers. 14, 15.

discovered his Secrets as a Friend (*h*). He doubted not but God would punish them for their spite and falshood, and accordingly he seems to foretell their ruine (*i*), wherefore leaving them to the righteous Judge of the World, his only care is to secure himself by frequent and fervent Prayer to that God who was both able and willing to defend him (*k*). So that these words are an Account of the method which *David* resolved to take for his own safety in times of danger and distress; his purpose was to pray in the Evening, Morning, and at Noon, and that instantly, being confident he should be heard and help'd. And the Resolution was not more pious than it was successful, for within a short time his Enemies were defeated, and he restored to his former Peace and Prosperity: Wherefore from hence we may learn these four seasonable and useful Lessons concerning Prayer.

h [illegible] *ladit*, [illegible] *pellatur*; [illegible] *micos*, *pa*[illegible] *minùs quàm parricida.* Petron. Arb.

i Vers. 16.

k Vers. 17, 18.

First, The great need there is for Prayer, especially in time of trouble. Secondly, The frequency of our coming to it. Thirdly, The fervency to be expressed in it. Fourthly, The benefit we may expect by it.

First, We will consider what great need we have to pray: When holy *David* had described his Danger, he presently fixes upon

the proper Remedy, and saith, *As for me I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me* (l). Prayer is our Duty always, because the King of Heaven commands it, but it is our Interest also in our troubles, because then we do extremely need it: If we do not believe God can help us, we are Atheists; and if we do believe this, and yet will not call on him in our distress, we are more stupid than the poor Pagans, who all cryed to their several Deities in *Jonah*'s storm (m); when our omnipotent and gracious God, not only permits indigent and necessitous Creatures daily to make requests to him, but enjoyns them to ask of him, and thereby gives them assurance he intends to grant their Petitions (n). One would think there would need no other Arguments to move them to embrace the favour, but the sense of his Mercy and their own Necessities; after this to neglect any opportunity, is to despise the Divine condescension, and looks as if we thought we had no need of God's assistance: So that it is a piece of the very worst mens Character, *That they have not called upon God* (o). Prayer is the means to keep from us all evil, and to procure for us all that is good; it is the way to gain assistance and protection, pardon and peace, grace and glory; it keeps us in health, restores us from sickness, relieves us in poverty, and secures us in plenty; it makes us wise, virtuous, and

l Psal. 55. 17.

m Jonah 1. 5.

n Matth. 7. 7. *Hortatur ut petas, negabit quod petis?* Aug. de Verb. Dom. 5.

o Psal. 14. 4.

and safe, causing us to live holily, and to dye happily, and providing for us all that is needful, either for our Souls or Bodies, and all that we can wish in this World or the next. Wherefore we are not only disobedient to God, but unkind to our selves, if we do at any time omit it. Though at present we have health and wealth, peace and plenty, these blessings are naturally fading and uncertain, they will soon desert us, if the same Providence which gave them be not sollicited to continue them: Or if we could retain these things without Prayer, we should but keep them to our hurt without the Divine grace and blessing, for an unsanctified Prosperity is the bane of Virtue (*p*), and we are less able still to bear up under Afflictions without Prayer, for then we need more than ordinary comfort and assistance, counsel and strength; so that whereas good men will pray in all estates, the very worst will not omit it when they are pinched with Necessities; they who impiously blaspheme God's Name at other times, will call upon it then (*q*), though such as have been wont to neglect and despise Heaven in prosperity, and to deny God, the requests he made them for their own good, in their Sun-shine days, These deserve to be neglected and despised by God when a Storm drives them to him for shelter, because it is not Affection, but dire Necessity that forces them to this unusual

p Prov. 1. 32. *Noverca siquidem virtutis est prosperitas.* Jo Sarisbur. Policrat.

q Hose. 5. 15.

r Judg. 10. 14. Prov. 1. 27, 28. *Qui quod vult Deus Deo negat, à Deo sibi quod desiderat vult negari.* Petr. Chrysol.

s Eccluſ. 38. 1.

t *Jure venit cultus ad ſibi quiſque Deos.* Ovid de Pont. l. 3.

u James 1.

uſual remedy (*r*). The Wiſe man adviſeth us *To honour the Phyſician before we have need of him* (s); and for the ſame reaſon we ought to ſerve God frequently, conſtantly and devoutly in our Felicity, and then we may with a better grace come into his Preſence when Trouble ſeizes on us, and may expect a kinder Reception (*t*). Yet if we have been negligent in former time, we muſt repent of that Impiety, and be more conſtant and devout in our Addreſſes for the future, unto that God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth no man (*u*), becauſe his compaſſions incline him rather to conſider our neceſſities than our deſervings: So that we muſt by no means omit to pray in our Afflictions, for then we are moſt fit to pray, and he is moſt likely to hear us; our Minds are then weaned from the World, and fixed upon Heaven; our Hearts are tender, our Souls humble, and our Affections moſt vigorous: And the Father of Mercies, the God of all Comforts, hath then a fit occaſion to expreſs his Infinite pity to his ſuffering Servants, who will entertain that as a double kindneſs, which is done for them at ſo proper a ſeaſon: If ſorrow have ſeized on us, Prayer will both give vent and eaſe to the Paſſion; nor can there be any better Cure for our Grief, than to pour into his boſom, who ſo is able and willing to comfort us: So that the pious Mother of holy *Samuel*, was no

no more of a ſad Countenance, after ſhe had breathed out her Complaints in a devout Prayer (*w*). If our Enemies terrifie us by their ſecret Deſigns or open Violences, there is no Defence like Prayer. So that when *David*'s Foes combined againſt him, *he gave himſelf unto Prayer* (x), as well knowing, if God were for him, none could be againſt him to hurt him (*y*). It was not only Piety but Prudence in King *Etheldred* (when he was told, in the midſt of his Office, that the *Danes* had begun to attack his Camp) to reſolve not to break off his Prayers (*z*): For thus he armed himſelf with the impenetrable Armor of the Divine Protection, without which he had gone naked to the Field, though he had been armed compleatly. It was a weak deſign in *Daniel*'s Enemies, to fancy they could fright him from his Prayers, by making it dangerous to pray, for the Danger made him pray more earneſtly; it only ſeemed to expoſe him to ſome perils, but it really ſecured him from all Perils, and brought him off ſafe, while his Enemies fell into the Snare they had contrived for him (*a*). The bleſſed Jeſus prepared for his Paſſion by a Prayer ſo earneſt, that his Devotion was the cauſe of his Agony (*b*); the fatal Tortures of his Croſs did not make him forget to pray for his Enemies. Nor could thoſe ſhowres of Stones which the barbarous Jews threw at the firſt Martyr, drive him

w 1 Sam. 1. 18.

x Pſal. 109. 4.

y Rom. 8. 31.

z Gul. Malmsb. de geſt. reg. l. 2. c. 3.

a Dan. 6. 10. &c.

b Luke 22. 44.

him from his Prayers till they took away his life (*c*). And when Pagan Emperors made it Capital to be found in a Christian Oratory, the Houses of Prayer were still full of such as were above the fear of death, because they were uncapable of being losers by it: And by their Prayers they were supported under this fiery Trial while it continued, and many of them survived it, and lived to behold and enjoy an universal and lasting Peace. Let rich men (if they please) count their Wealth their Security; Let the Mighty glory in their power; Let the Popular boast of their inconstant Friends, and Hypocrites make Flattery and Lyes their Refuge: Our Security is in God, and our Prayers are our best Defence: If any trouble fall upon us, we will go more frequently to our Churches, and pray more devoutly there; when the World takes occasion to quarrel with us, we will make a League with Heaven. We have proper *Psalms* to breath out our Sorrows in; proper Lessons to instruct and comfort us; we have suitable Collects, and a most pathetical Litany to sollicit for the Mercy we need; and the use of these Offices will either remove the Evil, or enable us to bear it, and make all things work together for our good at last (*d*), even those things of which we are most affraid, will end in our ruin, and seem at present the most contrary to our welfare. These are the Rea-

c Acts 7. verf. 59,60.

d Rom. 8. 28.

Reaſons in general why with holy *David* we reſolve to pray.

Secondly, If it be enquired how often we ought to pray? I reply, that as to Publick Prayer, if we will follow the directions of holy Scripture, and the example of thoſe holy Men whom we ought to imitate on earth, becauſe we hope to live with them in Heaven (*e*), we ought to pray ſolemnly three times a day in Publick, if we live in ſuch a place where we can have the convenience ſo to do; which I will now make out from Sacred Writ, from Antiquity, and from Reaſon, which all agree to perſwade us to this pious frequency in our Prayers.

e *Neſcio quâ fronte — cum omnibus Sanctis in æternâ beatitudine partem habere deſideramus, quorum exempla ſequi in rebus minimis non acquieſcimus.* Aug. de Temp. Ser. 61.

1. As to Scripture, this Text preſents us with the reſolution of *David*, who though he were a King, and always full of Cares, and engaged in weighty Affairs, and at this time laboured under the difficulties of *Abſolom*'s Rebellion, yet he declares *he would pray* (even in theſe circumſtances) *Morning, Noon, and Night.* So alſo *Daniel*, though he was the principal Miniſter of State in the Court of the greateſt Monarch then upon Earth, and had all the grand Affairs of that vaſt Empire upon his hands, and though he lived in the midſt of all the Luxuries of that magnificent and voluptuous Palace, yet neither buſineſs nor pleaſures could hinder him from kneeling on his Knees three times a day to pray to the King of Kings; yea, when a

new

new devised Law had made the forfeiture of his life the price of his Devotion, he still went on to observe his hours of Prayer (*f*). To which we may add the Example of our famous King *Alfred*, who (though he was involved in difficult Wars, and employed in the dispatch of all publick Affairs, yet) reserved eight hours out of every twenty four, for Reading, Writing, and Prayer, and carried the Book of *Psalms* always in his bosom, that he might never miss the reading those appointed for the day; and that he might certainly know when his hours of Prayer came (because Clocks were not then invented) he devised a Candle with such marks on it, that by the burning thereof he had notice of the Seasons for his business and his devotion also, as *W.* of *Malmsbury* relates (*g*). Now if these great Personages, in the midst of their high Imployments, had so much Piety as not to miss their Solemn Offices three times a day, we whose Station is lower, and our leisure far more, may blush at our poor Excuses, and may learn, That it is want of Devotion, and not of Time, that keeps us from being so frequent at our Prayers. It is certain, that the Turks, whom we call Infidels, do go to their Mosques five times every day to prayers (*h*), and shall they not rise up in judgment against those Christians who cannot afford to go thrice to God's House, when

f Dan. 6. 9, 10.

g Gul. Malmsb. de gest. reg. Angl. lib. 2. c. 4.

h Busbequij Epist. 1. pag. 19. item Georgevicc. de mor. Turc. c. 1. p. 11.

when they have both leiſure and opportunity? The Jews of old time uſed to obſerve theſe three hours of Prayer, as is plain from that paſſage of *Daniel*, who is ſaid (after the Decree was ſigned) *to pray and give thanks three times a day, as he did afore-time* (i); which ſhews that it had been always his cuſtom to go ſo often to his upper Room, the only Chappel he could have in that idolatrous Country to pray in. And S. *Hierom* affirms the Third, Sixth, and Ninth hours were obſerved for Sacrifices and Prayers in the Temple by all the Jews (*k*): Yea, the more pious of them at this day, wherever they live diſperſed, *Repair to their Devotions in their Synagogues three times a day; that is to ſay, in the Morning from Sun-riſing till the fourth hour of the day; in the Afternoon about the Ninth hour; and in the Evening about the beginning of the Night* (l). And there can be no reaſon why Chriſtians, who have higher Obligations, and a far better Service, ſhould ſeldomer ſerve God in Publick than the Jews: Eſpecially if we conſider that this pious Cuſtom of theirs in praying three times, was approved by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and by their Example recommended to us. Our Saviour was daily in the Temple and in the Synagogues, and no queſtion frequented thoſe places at the uſual hours, becauſe then he had the greateſt Aſſemblies to inſtruct and exhort to Faith

i Dan. 6. 10.

k Hieron. ap. Grot. in Matth. 27. 45.

l Leo Modena's Hiſtory of the preſent Jews, Chap. XI.

Faith and Repentance (*m*). The Apoſtles after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, *were continually in the Temple* (n); that is, at all thoſe Solemn hours of Prayer which were then obſerved: For as to the firſt hour of Prayer, they were in their upper Room adjoyning to the Temple, waiting for the promiſe of the Spirit, which was miraculouſly beſtowed on them before the third hour of the day, while they were at Morning Prayer (*o*). And that the Apoſtles were wont to pray conſtantly at this firſt hour of Prayer, and (according to the Cuſtom of the devout Jews) never uſed to eat or drink before Nine of the Clock, that is, till this hour of Prayer was fully paſt (*), appears from St. *Peter's* Argument, who proves the Apoſtles could not be drunk with Wine, as ſome ſuppoſed, becauſe it was yet but nine of the Clock; which would not have been a neceſſary concluſion, if the appeal had not been to Men who knew that the Apoſtles practice was never to drink till the third hour of the day (and conſequently the Morning Prayer) was over. The ſecond hour of Prayer was the ſixth hour, that is in *David's* phraſe Noon, or Twelve a Clock; and no doubt St. *Peter* was uſed to obſerve this hour at *Jeruſalem*, becauſe when he was at *Joppa*, he went up to the conſecrated place on the Houſe top at that hour to pray (*p*). And for the third hour of Prayer, or the ninth hour,

m John 18. 20. Luke 21. 38.

n Luke 24. 53. Vide Grot. in loc. & Hammond. Annot.

* Acts 2. 15. *Tertia hora deſcendit Spiritus Sanctus ſuper Apoſtolos.* Hier. in Dan. 6.

* *Maledictus qui prius refectionem corporis quam animæ quæſierit. Dictum* Hilarionis apud Hieron. Tom. 1. p. 327.

p Acts 10. 9.

hour, which is *David's* Evening, and our Three in the Afternoon, it is expressly recorded that *Peter and* John *went up to the Temple at the ninth hour, being the hour of prayer* (q); and *Cornelius* had a Message sent him from Heaven as he was praying at *Cæsarea* at the ninth hour (r). All which abundantly declares that Christ and his Apostles, and other holy men, did observe these hours of prayer, and Almighty God declared he was pleased with it, in so remarkably answering the Prayers then made.

q Acts 3.1.

r Acts 10.3.

2. We proceed to Antiquity to enquire whether this pious frequency did continue after the Apostles time: And it is plain that those devout Ages (who took more heed to an Example than we do to express Commands) did think themselves obliged to keep the same hours of solemn prayer that Christ and his Apostles had used: For *Clement Alexandrinus* tells us, *There are certain fixed hours set apart for solemn prayer, that is, the Third, the Sixth, and the Ninth hours* (s). The like we find in *Tertullian*, who saith, *Though we be required to pray without ceasing, yet there are three hours, which are not only most eminent for dividing the day, and dispatch of publick Affairs, but also as being the solemn times of our prayers* (t). St. *Cyprian* also affirms, *That the Christians had learned from* Daniel, *&c. to keep the Third, the Sixth, and Ninth hours, as proper for celebrating prayers* (u). St. *Basil*

s Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. 7.

t Tertul. de jejun. cap. 6.

u Cypr. expos. Orat. Domin.

Basil advises us *to observe the very same hours for prayer which holy men in Scripture are recorded to have used* (w). To which may be added that of S. *Hierom*, who saith, *The Ecclesiastical Tradition expounds* Daniel's *three times a day, to be the Third, the Sixth, and Ninth hours, in which we kneel and pray to God* (x): And the same Father adviseth *the devout Virgins to come into the Assemblies of the Faithful at the Third, Sixth, and Ninth hours, that so they might be constant in their Christian Warfare* (y). It is also related in the life of *Fulgentius* a devout *African* Bishop, *That he required his people to be thrice every day present at publick prayers* (z). By which Testimonies it plainly appears, that so long as the primitive Devotion continued, Christians used to pray thrice a day: Afterwards (it is likely by the Peoples slackness in coming to the publick Assemblies) we find the Clergy were required very strictly, even upon pain of Suspension, to say their Office in publick twice every day (a): And this seems to be all that was required of the Secular Clergy for some Ages; for the Prayers being kept in the Latin Tongue, which was beginning to grow out of common use, and was understood by very few, the People became very slack in coming to those prayers which they did not understand. And it is probable that upon this decay of Devotion, the profession of Monkery coming in, they

w Basil. regul. brev. inter. 37.

x Hieron. Com. in Dan. 6.

y Idem ad Læt. tom. Ep. 7.

z Vita Fulgentij. pag. 35.

a Concil. S. Patricij ap. Spelm. Tom. I. pag. 52. Concil. Tolet. primum, An. 400. Can. 5. Capitul. Francorum lib. 7. cap. 161.

they pretended not only to reduce the old primitive hours of Prayer, but (having nothing elſe to do) they added four more hours to the former, and ſo in Monaſteries there were ſeven hours of Prayer obſerved (of which the Ancients are ſilent, and for which there are many myſtical Reaſons in the later Authors (*b*)). But ſtill this was not to Edification; for the People rarely came to theſe hours of Prayer, and the Monks had a Notion which they propagated for their advantage, That if Lay-men were liberal to the Clergy, their prayers were as effectual for them in their abſence as if they had been actually preſent at them: Which Opinion in time brought in the ſaying thoſe Offices in Corners, which of old were always ſaid in full Aſſemblies, and which were deſigned no doubt for the People to joyn in, and not only to exerciſe the Prieſts Devotion, but to edifie the whole Congregation. And therefore when our Church reſolved to reforme thoſe Corruptions which had crept into Divine Offices in the ignorant Ages, and had, according to S. *Paul*'s direction and the Primitive Uſage, tranſlated the Scripture, and framed Prayers in the Vulgar Tongue, which even Lay-men could underſtand: They then again required the Peoples preſence at the publick Prayers, enjoyning Miniſters, when they are about to begin Prayers, to take care *that a Bell be tolled a*

b Vide Card. Bona de divin. Pſalmodia c. 2.

Rubric concerning the Service of the Church.

convenient time before Prayers begin, that the People may come to hear God's Word, and to pray with him (c); for we do not think the Priests praying for the people doth excuse such of them as have health and leisure from coming to pray for themselves, and they are unworthy of the blessing of English Prayers, and ungrateful for this excellent piece of Reformation, who do not come and joyn with their Minister as often as they can. If it be objected, That the aforesaid Rubric only enjoyns the Minister to say Morning and Evening Prayer, that is to pray only twice in publick. I answer this Rubric was to be general: And in Country Towns and Villages this is as often as any Priest can hope to get a Congregation to joyn with him, because the People of those places generally work abroad in the Fields for a great part of the year, and in those places it were very well if the people would encourage their Minister to have Prayers twice a day, they might then supply the third hour by their private Devotions: But in great Cities and at Cathedrals, where there are many persons always at leisure to attend Prayers, there either the local Statutes of those places, or the Devotion of the Clergy, or the Bounty of some pious Benefactors, hath provided Prayers three times every day; and if we live in such places, we then may observe the primitive hours

of

of Prayer: Only by reaſon of the differ-
ence between them and us as to our Cli-
mate, and our times of publick Meals; we
have a little varied the particular time, yet
ſo as our firſt hour of Prayer is at Six in
the Morning, which falls within the com-
paſs of the Ancients third hour (from Six
to Nine); our ſecond hour of prayer at
Ten of the Clock, falls within their Sixth
hour (which was from Nine to Twelve);
and our third hour of Prayer is removed to
Four a Clock (ſomething after their Ninth
hour) that it may be more properly called
an Evening Prayer. And thus we ſee what
care our Church hath taken to give us op-
portunities to imitate holy *David*'s Exam-
ple; ſo that we may, if we pleaſe, pray to
God inſtantly, Morning, Noon, and Even-
ing.

3. We will produce ſome Reaſons and
Motives to perſwade thoſe of our Commu-
nion to pray three times a day, according
to the Examples and Authorities already
produced: And we ſhall reduce our Conſi-
derations to theſe five Heads: Firſt, It tends
to the Glory of God. Secondly, It pro-
motes the Honour and Intereſt of our holy
Religion. Thirdly, It ſets forward our own
Salvation. Fourthly, The Church may
expect it. Fifthly, It is very poſſible for
moſt of us to perform it.

1. This frequent coming to publick Prayers doth evidently tend to the Glory of God, at which we ought to aim in all our Actions (c). It is *Solomon*'s observation, that *in the multitude of people is the Kings honour* (d); and the more numerous our Assemblies are, the more evident we make it to all Mankind that we serve a mighty and merciful God, who hath thrice a day so many humble Suppliants kneeling at his Footstool, by this we declare that we are of the number of those Servants and Dependants of his who have been obliged by his favours, and are encouraged by his constant kindness often to come into his Courts: whereas our absence from his House looks like a renouncing of his Service, and seems as if we thought we had no need of his Providence and Mercy. Perhaps we may pretend we do pray in private; but that hath not so plain a promise of Christ's presence, as the publick Offices, wherein we are gathered together in Christ's Name, and agree to ask the same things (e). And as his Blessings are openly bestowed upon us, so should our Thanks be openly paid to him; for as *Seneca* notes, *Thanks rendred by whispers in a corner, is not a sign of modesty, but ingratitude, and is one sort of denying the kindness we have received* (f). And after all, if private Prayer did serve our Necessities as well as publick, it doth not give so plain a testimony to the

c 1 Cor. 10. 31.
d Prov. 14. 28.
e Matth. 18. 19, 20.
f Senec. de ben. lib. 3. cap. 23.

Divine

Divine Bounty, the declaring whereof is one of the great ends of our Creation: And this frequent coming to God's House is one of those good Works which when men behold, they cannot but glorifie our Father who is in Heaven (*g*), and it is probable they may be wrought upon by our Example to come and joyn with us in these holy Offices: We daily pray that God's Name may be hallowed, and by this means we both hallow it our selves, and so effectually declare it to others, as to engage them to hallow it also. Whereas the slighting and neglecting the opportunities of God's Service, argues we have but little love to him, or regard of him, and is a manifest Contempt of him, an Affront so great and intollerable, as may justly provoke him to take those Opportunities from us which we value at so mean a rate. We call him Lord and Master, and profess our selves his Servants, and yet, though all the Service we can do him is to praise him for his goodness, and to pray frequently for his blessing, we refuse him this small Tribute and Homage, or will not make publick payment of it.

g Matth. 5. 16.

2. Our constant attendance on the Churches Prayers promotes the Honour and Interest of our holy Religion: For nothing doth more visibly commend a Religion, than

the influence it hath on the practices of those that profess it, if they worship God frequently and fervently in great numbers, and with great devotion, it is apt to make all impartial men esteem it, & strangers must think well of those Offices which are so attractive. Besides, there is no better means to engage the Providence of God to continue the Opportunities to us, than constant and earnest Prayer; and therefore if we be sincere in our desires for the peaceable enjoyment of this happy freedom, we must not neglect to pray for it. We all pretend a mighty zeal for our Religion, but if we do not practice the most useful and comfortable part of it while we may, our seeming Zeal is meer Hypocrisie; nor will any one believe that such a man is afraid of Famine, who is resolved to starve when he hath meat besides him. He that is sincerely concerned for his Religion, is one that loves it, and all the Offices thereof; he hath found comfort and benefit in that way of Worship, and upon that ground desires he may not only long, but often enjoy those blessed Opportunities. The same affection which makes men desire its continuance, must bring them often to God's House, and to the Assemblies of those who profess the same Religion; otherwise they give just cause of suspicion that their warmth for the peaceable profession of it proceeds from Secular considerations: But I am unwilling to think thus

thus of the generality of the Members of our Communion, who have given of late very eminent Teſtimonies that they underſtand and love their own Religion for its own ſake, or the ſpiritual advantages they find by it. Which generous conſtancy to their Creed, ſeems alſo to ſhew it ſelf in many places by a more conſtant attendance on the Prayers, which are now better frequented than ever, and I make no doubt the oftner men uſe them with devotion, the better they will like them: So that coming frequently to theſe excellent Offices, will not only declare, but ſecure their Conſtancy, and not only make them love their Religion, but prevail with God to preſerve it alſo. We cannot but obſerve with what diligence and zeal all other Parties do now go to their ſeveral Aſſemblies, to make their Numbers appear as conſiderable as they can: And we may ſo far learn from our Adverſaries (*b*), as not to be ſlack in coming to our Worſhip at ſuch a time when full Churches are ſo great a credit to our Religion, and ſo undeniable a Teſtimony of our ſincerity. And I do the more earneſtly preſs this now, becauſe if all that are Members of the Church of *England*, as it is eſtabliſhed by Law, were as careful to come conſtantly to her Worſhip, as other Parties are to theirs, our Churches would as far exceed their Aſſemblies in number, as our Service excels theirs in true value and worth.

h Μάθοι γάρ τις καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἐχθρῶν σοφόν. Ariſtophanes.

3. Our

3. Our constant attendance on the Churches Prayers tends very much to the profit and benefit of our Souls: For all our Offices serve to Edification, they make us wiser and better, and by coming to all the hours of Prayer, we are kept continually mindful of Heaven, being call'd off in every little period of our time to converse with our God, and stir'd up to seek these things that are above (*i*). And whereas we are apt to cleave too close to this World, the frequent return of these Duties will not allow us to sink too deep into its Cares and Pleasures, nor to fix our Minds too intently on it; and whereas no man can at once love or serve God and the World (*k*), this both declares our principal affection is for God, and our chiefest care to serve him, and helps us to overcome that vehement love of this evil World which is so dangerous and destructive to our Souls. Moreover, this frequency in Prayer secures us against all other Temptations, to which we shall not dare to yield, when we remember we were so lately in the presence of a holy God, and must within a very little while return again to call upon him who will not hear Sinners, nor receive their Prayers who regard Iniquity even in their hearts (*l*): And as we have fresh Temptations every hour, so this gains us new strength and fresh Resolutions to use it: It sanctifies every part

i Coloss. 3. 1.

k 1 John 2. 15. Matth. 6. 24.

l John 9. 31. Psal. 66. 18.

of

of our time, and brings down Bleſſings upon our ſelves and our Families, our Friends and Relations, upon the King and the Church, upon Miniſters and Magiſtrates, and upon all ſorts of Men: And ſince we can neither begin, carry on, nor end any thing wiſely or ſucceſſively without the bleſſing of Heaven (as one of the very Heathens obſerves (*m*)); How can we think thrice a day too often to pray for that which is ſo neceſſary every moment? Whoever objects againſt the frequency of thrice a day, forgets his own frailty and manifold neceſſities, and doth not ſeriouſly conſider how often he needs Mercy and Grace: he thinks not of the frequency of his ſins, nor of the number of thoſe dangers to which he is always expoſed; nor hath he weighed the infinite value of the Divine Favour, to obtain which no pains are too great: If the trouble and difficulty do deter us, let us conſider the benefit and reward (*n*): For none do improve more in holineſs and virtue, in wiſdom and true piety, than thoſe who are moſt conſtant at theſe Prayers. The ſeeming expence of time and labour is abundantly recompenced by the encreaſe of all our Graces, and the manifeſt advancing in our way to Heaven: So that if we love our better part, and have any concern for our immortal Souls, we cannot any way better expreſs it than by this conſtancy and frequency in our Prayers.

m *Bene majores inſtituerunt, rerum agendarum initium à precationibus capere, quod nihil rite nihil providenter homines ſine Deorum immortalium ope, conſilio, honore auſpicarentur.* Plin. paneg. ad Trajan.

(n) *Secundum moleſtiam merces.* Dictum R. Moſ. Maimon.

4. The

4. The Church may justly expect this from all her Members, that so often as she provides Conveniences, so often they (who are not hindred by unavoidable business or infirmities) should gratefully comply with those Opportunities: For there is no other way to shew our Communion with the Church but by our being present at her Publick Offices; this is as necessary, as for all those of a Family to be present at every solemn Meal; and the Apostle, even in times of Persecution, charges the Christian Hebrews *not to forsake the assembling of themselves together* (o). When we were admitted into the Church by Baptism, we then promised to serve God truly all the days of our Life, and we both break and forget that Vow if we come seldom to the Service of God. As for manifest Dissenters they are without, and we will not judge them (p); we pity them, and pray for the removal of their Prejudices and evil Principles. But as for those who are within the Church, they really deserve Censure for their absence, because (at this time especially) it is a deserting and disowning their dear Mother, a great discouragement to her Priests, and an ill Example to their Neighbours: It causes their Friends to be dejected, and makes their Adversaries insult, yea, it gives colour to that Contempt which some of them pour upon this excellent

o Heb. 10. 25. & vers. 34.

p 1 Cor. 5. 12, 13.

cellent Church; wherein there is better provision made for the profiting of the Congregation, than in any other Assemblies now among us. Our Prayers themselves do invite all unprejudiced Persons to attend them, being a well studied and judicious Form, drawn up according to the directions of Scripture, and the most Primitive Patterns, in which the most piercing Eyes of our contentious Adversaries could never find any material Faults, and the Excellencies whereof even Foreigners have admired: There are none of those Confusions in the Method, Improprieties in the Stile, nor suspected Positions in the Matter, to which all extempore Forms are lyable. They are also plain to the meanest Capacity, and according to St. *Paul*'s direction (*q*), they are in our own Mother Tongue; and in them, according to his Rule, *All things are done to edification* (r): The meanest of our people (after the Primitive Custom) can here pray with the Spirit and with Understanding, and make Responses as the first Christians used to do. In these Prayers we have Exhortations to repentance, and promises of pardon, confession of sins, and prayers for grace to amend our lives. There we may read those divine *Psalms* which contain Devotions proper for all conditions. There we may hear the rest of Gods holy Word, and learn every time we go, some new Lesson for our Souls health. There we may Praise God, and call upon

q 1 Cor. 14. 15.

r Ibid. ver. 26.

upon his Name, we may confeſs our Faith, and conſider the Obligations it lays upon us, we may declare our concern for our own Salvation, and our Charity for all Mankind; we may expreſs our Loyalty to our King, our love to our Paſtors, our pity to the Sick and Miſerable, and our affection for all the People: And if we can at once do ſo many Duties to God, and good Offices for our Neighbours, how ſhall we juſtifie our neglect? If we had nothing to do at our Churches but to hear an uncertain ſound of words without underſtanding or profit (*s*), or came only to behold a few dumb Ceremonies; if our Prayers were no more but ſuch vain Repetitions as the Heathens uſed (*t*), our abſence might admit of ſome Apology; but when they are ſo rarely ſuted to all our Neceſſities, and ſo apt to miniſter to our Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal Good, the Church that hath made this Proviſion may very juſtly complain of us: Her Miniſters are ready, her Offices prepared, and we are the Gueſts who are invited; and unleſs we have great occaſion (which cannot happen very often) our ſtaying away is both criminal and unkind.

s 1 Cor. 14. 7, 8, 9.

t Matth. 6. 7. 1 Kings 18. 26. Saubertus de Sacrif. cap. 13.

Laſtly, It is poſſible for moſt of us to perform this Duty, which we really pretend to be more difficult than it is: For there are

are not many who are ſo extremely buſie, but they do find, and can ſpare three half hours in every day for idle Diſcourſe, impertinent Viſits, and needleſs Recreations: theſe devour far more of our precious time than going thrice a day to God's Houſe; and if we did wiſely fore-caſt our Affairs, we might pare off as much time from unneceſſary things as would ſuffice to ſerve God as often as good Men of old have done. There are many pious people who do not want Buſineſs, that actually do redeem ſo much time from the World; and therefore our abſence proceeds not ſo much from want of leiſure as inclination (*u*), becauſe devout people break through all thoſe Difficulties, which others pretend for their Excuſe. So that I muſt deſire men to conſider the Examples, Precepts, and Promiſes of holy Scripture upon which this frequency is grounded; as alſo to meditate upon the preſent comfort, and the future reward of it, to remember that when they come to dye, and account for the expence of their time, they will not be able to give ſo good an account for any of it, as for that which was ſo piouſly employed. And if they can perſwade themſelves to reſolve to come as often as they can poſſible, a little uſe will make it eaſie (*w*), and after ſome time our Buſineſs will comply with theſe pious purpoſes, and we ſhall ſeldom be hindred from per-

(*u*) *Cum quid difficile videtur difficiliora alios obeuntes, recenſeamus.* Tertul. ad uxor. l. 1. §. 6.

(*w*) Ἕλκε βιὸν ἄεισον ἥδιον δ' αὐτὸν ἡ συνήθεια ποιήσει. Pythag. dict.

performing them, or if at any time we be; it will be as uneaſie to us to miſs as it was at firſt to come. I know there are ſome who are kept confined at home by bodily ſickneſs, and others whoſe Affairs carry them abroad, or whoſe Habitations are very remote from the Houſe of God: Now all theſe have a juſt and neceſſary excuſe for their abſence (x), and it can be only expected from ſuch, that they do by a private Devotion ſupply their want of the Publick Aſſemblies. And it may happen, that ſuch as would come always, may be ſometimes prevented by a ſudden and unforeſeen occaſion, and in ſuch a caſe there is no ſin, and need be no ſcruple. But that which makes our Prayers ill attended, is the abſence of thoſe who are kept away by ſhameful lazineſs, by being imployed in impertinent things, or purſuing their ſins; it is thoſe who are doing nothing, or that which is worſe than nothing, who are to blame: For if all would come thrice a day who might come without any prejudice to their health or buſineſs of neceſſity, then all would be preſent that God or the Church expects: And if none would ſtay away but thoſe who can give ſuch a reaſon for it, as will be allowed by God and their own Conſcience, we ſhould have full Congregations at all the hours of Prayer: Wherefore the performance of this Duty is neither difficult nor impoſſible.

(x) *Quicquid neceſſitas peccat non poteſt magnus viribus accuſari —— voluntas habet pœnam, neceſſitas veniam.* Optat. Mil. l. 7. c. 101.

poſſible. We ſee the Courtiers of an earthly Prince watch his riſing up and lying down, his going out and coming in, and endeavour to be always in his ſight, and all this only to wait for a fit ſeaſon to preſent their Petitions for ſome fading Honour or troubleſom Employment; and ſhall we think it a hard Task to give a far leſs attendance on the King of Kings, of whom we have more and greater Favours to beg? Let us conſider how many tedious hours, in dark Nights and ſtormy Days, the poor Souldier ſtands upon the Guard for a ſmall pay (*y*). Let us view the Ambitious and the Covetous, the Voluptuous and Malicious, and compute the time they daily ſpend in purſuing thoſe things which gratifie their vitious Appetites: And it will appear there is required leſs time and pains from us, to do honour to God, to bring credit to our Religion, and to ſecure our everlaſting Happineſs: Wherefore it is very reaſonable for all that are ſincerely concerned for theſe things, to reſolve as holy *David* here doth, ***Morning and Evening and at Noon will I pray, and that inſtantly.***

(*y*) *Quibus denis in diem aſſibus corpus & anima æſtimatur.* Tacit. Ann. l. 1.

For Thirdly, we muſt not only pray often, but earneſtly alſo, ſo this Royal Pſalmiſt did, the frequency did not abate of the fervency of his Prayers: He prayed *inſtantly*: The Original implies he was zealous

lous and earneſt in his Petitions. Our later Engliſh Verſion hath, *I will cry aloud:* as men in great fear or neceſſity are wont to do. And ſo our Saviour's earneſtneſs in his Prayers is expreſſed by his *Offering up Prayers and Supplications with ſtrong crying and tears* (z). Other Tranſlations here have *And am importunate* (a), to ſhew that it is not the bare reciting the words of our Prayers will ſuffice, unleſs we mind the Senſe, and be importunate in every one of the Requeſts we make; for as the Body without the Spirit is dead, ſo Prayer without Devotion is lifeleſs and ineffectual. There are a ſort of Chriſtians who have encreaſed the hours of Prayer, requiring Seven or Eight times for praying in each day; but then their Prayers being in an unknown Tongue, they are forced to diſpenſe with thoſe who ſay them, and declare, *That it is not eſſential to Prayer for a man to think particularly of what he ſays; nor is it neceſſary he ſhould actually think of the things ſignified by the words* (b). But theſe Guides of theirs expreſly contradict our Saviour, who ſaith, (c) *They worſhip God in vain, who draw near to him with their mouths, when their hearts are far from him.* And S. *James* affirms, That the Prayer even of a Righteous man will not avail, unleſs it comes from his heart, and be very fervent (d). Prayer is a wiſh and deſire of the Soul for ſomething which we

z Heb. 5. 7.

a Verſio Tigur. & Vatabl. Pſal. 55. 18.

b Tolet de inſtruct. Sacerdot. lib. 2. cap. 13. Jacob. de Graffiis deciſ. Aureæ lib. 2. cap. 52.

c Matth. 15. 8, 9.

d James 5. 16. ἐνεργουμένη.

we want; and to create this deſire, we muſt both know and actually think of theſe wants, or elſe we cannot from our hearts wiſh for their ſupply; and God who ſees our hearts, knows we do not pray at all, if our Tongues repeat words which our Mind never attends or regards: And this is the difference between Petitions made to God, and thoſe made to Men; if we look ſeriouſly, and ask humbly with a paſſionate Voice, Men judge us to be ſincere; but it is an affront to the Divine Omniſcience to hope by bended knees, grave looks, and a mournful tone to impoſe upon him, when our mouths are ſaying one thing, and our hearts roving after another. I confeſs it is a very difficult thing to keep our Minds cloſe to the things we pray for; but it is therefore ſo much the more neceſſary for us to watch our hearts in Prayer, becauſe doubtleſs it is a great ſin to ſeem to ask of God ſuch things as we do not once think upon; inſomuch that holy men have lamented nothing more than the wandring of their thoughts in Prayer. One of the Ancients us'd to ſay, *If God ſhould only impute to us the roving of our mind in praying, reading, and holy Offices, we could not be ſaved* (e). And S. *Bernard* was ſo wholly intent upon that which he prayed for, that it is reported of him, *He did not know how many Windows there were in that Chappel in which he had done his De-*

e Theodor. Ab. ap. Coteler. Monum. Eccleſ. Græc. Tom. I. 461.

f Vit. D. Bernard. in oper. pag. 1969.

g Prov. 26.23.

h 1 Sam. 1.13. *Nos nisi loquentem audire non possumus, apud Deum loquuntur non verba sed cogitationes.* Ambros. de Cain & Abel c. 9.

votions for many years (f). So that these good Men were far from thinking this fervency was not necessary. And since we know God requires not so much our Lips as our Hearts (*g*), and that he heard *Hannahs* Prayer, though she only prayed in her Mind (*h*). Our care must be to keep our thoughts fixed upon the things we are petitioning for: And that we may pray instantly and importunately, let us as we are going to the House of God, meditate, how great and pressing our Necessities and Dangers are, how many and grievous Sins we are guilty of; let us consider how unworthy we are to ask, and yet how miserable we shall be if we do not prevail; how glorious a God we are approaching unto, and yet how merciful a Father he is to all that call upon him faithfully; and having thus filled our Souls with humble reverence, earnest desires, and lively hopes, with a deep sense of our wants, and a firm faith in God's All-sufficiency, we shall find it easie to pray attentively, and with great Devotion. The only reason why men pray more earnestly in their Sufferings and their Fears than at other times, being only that they are then more sensible of their wants, and more affected with Divine Goodness. Perhaps some may think our praying so often will abate of our fervency, and that we can scarce do that very well which we do

do ſo very frequently. But this Objection is made by ſuch as have not tried the Experiment: For ſuch who pray the moſt conſtantly, pray the moſt devoutly; and the good frame which one hour of Prayer puts them into, is not gone off before it be revived by another (*i*). We cannot imagine *David* or *Daniel* were leſs earneſt in their Prayers becauſe they ſaid them thrice a day, or that the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians were not ſo fervent, becauſe they were ſo frequent in their Devotions: Our Neceſſities return at every hour of Prayer, and if our ſenſe of them did as often return, we ſhould always be diſpoſed for our Offices: Our Meat we eat yeſterday doth not ſatisfie this days hunger, nor doth our ſleeping one night make us neglect to lye down to reſt when the next cometh: Our eſcaping a danger in the Morning, is no Security we ſhall not meet another before Evening: Our Nature is always frail and craving, our Wants grow upon us every moment, we conſtantly depend on Providence, and continually need Mercy; So that it is only our ſtupidity, and being inſenſible of our Condition, that makes us dull and unaffected when we come to pray: For if we ſhould call upon God as often as we need his help, we might (with the old *Meſſalians*) literally practice S. *Paul*'s advice,

(*i*) *Conſuetis regibus abeſt difficultas, quia ſi quid in iis eſt aſperi id meditatio uſuſque hebetavit.* Procop. Gothic. l. 4.

vice, and *Pray without ceasing* (k). However, if we be excused by praying thrice a day, we cannot be excused from doing it every time in the best manner we can. It may be, those who have had the prejudices of an unhappy Education, may fancy they cannot pray instantly by a Form. But methinks it might convince them of their mistake, to consider that the Jewish Usage was always to pray by Set-forms; and holy men then prayed very devoutly by Forms, and God heard them. So did the Royal Prophet here, he made Forms for others, and used them himself, yet he prayed very fervently. *Daniel* had the Spirit of God (*l*), and made his Prayers by so miraculous a Faith, as to stop the mouths of the devouring Lyons, as his Companions also made a Prayer in Faith to quench the violence of Fire; yet according to the custom of their Nation, they commonly used Forms of Prayer (*m*). Now it is strange that we should despise that method of Praying which inspired persons of a strong Faith always used, and that Forms, which could work Miracles then, will not serve us to ordinary purposes now. Our blessed Lord required his Disciples to worship God in Spirit and in Truth (*n*), and he taught them a Form of Prayer, and enjoyned them to use the very words of it (*o*). The ground of

k 1 Thess. 5. 17.

l Dan. 4. 28.

m Hebr. 11. 33.

n John 4. 24.

o Luke 11. 2.

of theſe mens Error is, that they have a wrong Notion of praying by the Spirit, which they have falſly applyed to the inventing of words Extempore, in Prayer. But to *pray by the Spirit* in the New Teſtament, either ſignifies to pray by the miraculous gift of the Spirit in an unknown Tongue (p), which none of our Enthuſiaſts dare now pretend to: Or elſe it ſignifies *to pray fervently* (q), even as to *Love in the Spirit*, is *to love very fervently and ſincerely* (r). And this is a gift of the Spirit which never ceaſeth; for whenever holy men pray, the Spirit of God fixes their thoughts, and moves their affections, making them intent upon, and earneſt in their Petitions. But we are better diſpoſed for this kind of aſſiſtance from the Spirit in a known Form, than in any Extempore Prayer: For in the uſe of a Form which we fully underſtand and approve, and which Cuſtom hath made familiar to us, we can more freely meditate of the weight and importance of every Petition as we go along, and have more liberty to ſtir up in our Souls vigorous deſires, than in ſudden and unpremeditated Prayers, where the Speakers fancy is ſo buſie in inventing new Expreſſions, and the hearers Minds ſo taken up with the novelty of the Phraſe and Style, that they have little time to attend to the Senſe and matter. The

p 1 Cor. 14. verſ. 14, 15, 16.
q Epheſ. 6. 18.
r Coloſſ. 1. 8.

variety of the Expreſſion may make ſome warm impreſſions on mens Imaginations for the preſent, but the Deſires produced by thoſe kind of Ruptures, are not ſo rational, ſteddy, nor laſting as thoſe produced by a well ſtudied Form. The beſt men for fifteen hundred years together generally uſed Forms in all Publick Worſhip; and thoſe who diligently mind the Senſe of them ſo, as that their wiſhes and affections keep pace with their words, do undoubtedly pray by the Spirit now. To conclude, we have all things made ready to our hands in order to our praying inſtantly; an acurate Form, proper and pious Matter, devout and moving Expreſſions, comprehenſive and ſuitable Petitions; there is nothing for us to do, but to bring an heart full of Humility, Faith and Love, to God and to our Neighbours, and to watch over our Thoughts and Affections that they neither wander nor flag, and then we ſhall find the Spirit of God aſſiſting us to purſue every one of theſe Petitions with ſo vigorous an importunity as will make them reach to the Ears of our Heavenly Father. We cannot deny but we ſometimes uſe them with great Devotion, and if we do not ſo always, the Fault is not in the Prayers, which are always the ſame, but in the indiſpoſition of our own hearts, which ſometimes are not well prepared.

Fourth-

Fourthly and Laſtly, To encourage us to take ſome pains to put our Minds in frame for this Duty, as often as we have opportunity, Let us conſider the ſucceſs of frequent and fervent Prayer, which we may learn from the laſt Clauſe of this Text, *And he ſhall hear my voice:* that is, *How often ſoever I pray inſtantly, God will hearken to my requeſts, and grant them:* For our Lord is ſo gracious in his Nature, that he cannot hear the miſerable and neceſſitous cry unto him, without pitying and relieving them. And now what greater happineſs can we have in this World, than that whatever we wiſh for, if it be good for us, ſhall be granted to us: If we want any thing for our Souls or Bodies, for our Selves or our Friends, if we thus ſeek we ſhall find, if we thus ask we ſhall have (*s*). We may go as often as we pleaſe to this ever-flowing Fountain, and need never return empty; the oftner we come the more welcome we ſhall be: For thoſe emanations of the Divine Goodneſs which refreſh his Suppliants, do not (like our Charities) leſſen the original Store. His inexhauſtible Bounty is like the light of the Sun, which is not diminiſhed by the uſe we make of it, and the comfort we take in it. So that it is unpardonable ſtupidity for us to languiſh under wants and preſſures, rather than we will in ſo eaſie a way ſeek relief. It

(*s*) Matth. 7. 7.

is

is a part of the Character of our God, that he is *the God that heareth Prayer*; and thence it is inferred, *therefore to him shall all Flesh* (which is ever indigent and neceſſitous) *come* (*t*). If we were to pray to feigned Powers, on whom we might call from Morning to Noon (from one hour of Prayer to another) without any anſwer or return (*u*). Or if we were to make Supplications to the Spirits of the deceaſed, who do not know any thing of our Condition here on Earth, no not though they be as dear to God as *Abraham* and *Joſiah* were, as both the Scripture and ancient Doctors aſſure us (*w*), we might well reckon our praying ſo often a needleſs labour, and a vain expence of time: But we are to go to that Omniſcient and Omnipotent God, whoſe Knowledge is as infinite as his Power; and therefore if many thouſands pray at the ſame time in as many thouſand places, and every one of them ask a ſeveral Favour, he can hear and help them all, (which no Creature can do) to him therefore we may always go with comfort and ſatisfaction. There were Saints and Angels in Heaven before the Canon of Scripture was finiſhed, and yet we do not find there that any Prayers were made to any of them, no nor for divers Centuries after; and when Superſtition had brought in the uſe of addreſſing to them, their moſt refined Doctors could

t Pſal. 65. 2.

u 1 Kings 18. verſ. 26. & 28.

w Eccleſ. 9. 5. Iſai. 63. 16. 2 Kings 22. 20. *Ibique ſunt ſpiritus defunctorum, ubi non vident quæ aguntur aut eveniunt hominibus in iſtâ vitâ — nec quietos inquieta vita mortalium ſollicitat.* Aug. de cur. pro mortuis.

could never agree how finite Beings could hear a multitude of Petitioners in distant places at one time; and the very doubting whether we are heard or no, is enough to damp our Affections, and spoil our Devotion: Whereas all the Petitions of our excellent Liturgy being made only to God, the assurance he can, and the promise he will hear us, gives us a lively hope and vigour; which not only encourageth us to pray (x), but also engageth an infinite Bounty to give liberally to us: For we may perceive even in Human Nature, that nothing is more obliging than when men have so honourable an Opinion of us, that they do intirely rely upon us (y), much more will it oblige the infinite Goodness of Almighty God, if he perceives we rely on him who hath promised us to save those that hope in him meerly because they trust on him. He hath bid us come with an humble boldness, and a full assurance of Faith to the Throne of Grace (z), upon condition we come in the Name of Jesus Christ, in whose Name and Mediation alone, all our Prayers are drawn up: And therefore since we have such need to pray, such a Form to pray by, and such assurance to be heard, let us *be careful for nothing, but in every thing by Prayer and Supplication let all our requests be made known to God* (a). We need not fret or grieve, be terrified

x *Tolle spem perveniendi & franguntur vires ambulandi.* Aug. de verb. Ap. Ser. 16.

y *Salvabit eos quia speraverunt in eo; Dulcis causa attamen efficax nimirum hoc hominis meritum est, si totam spem suam ponit in eo qui totum hominem salvum facit.* Bern in Ps. 91.

z Hebr. 4. 16. & Chap. 10. 22.

a Philip. 4. 16.

terrified or repine, if we be thus frequent and thus devout, our Desire shall be granted for our Lord Jesus Christ his sake, to whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory now and for ever, Amen.

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